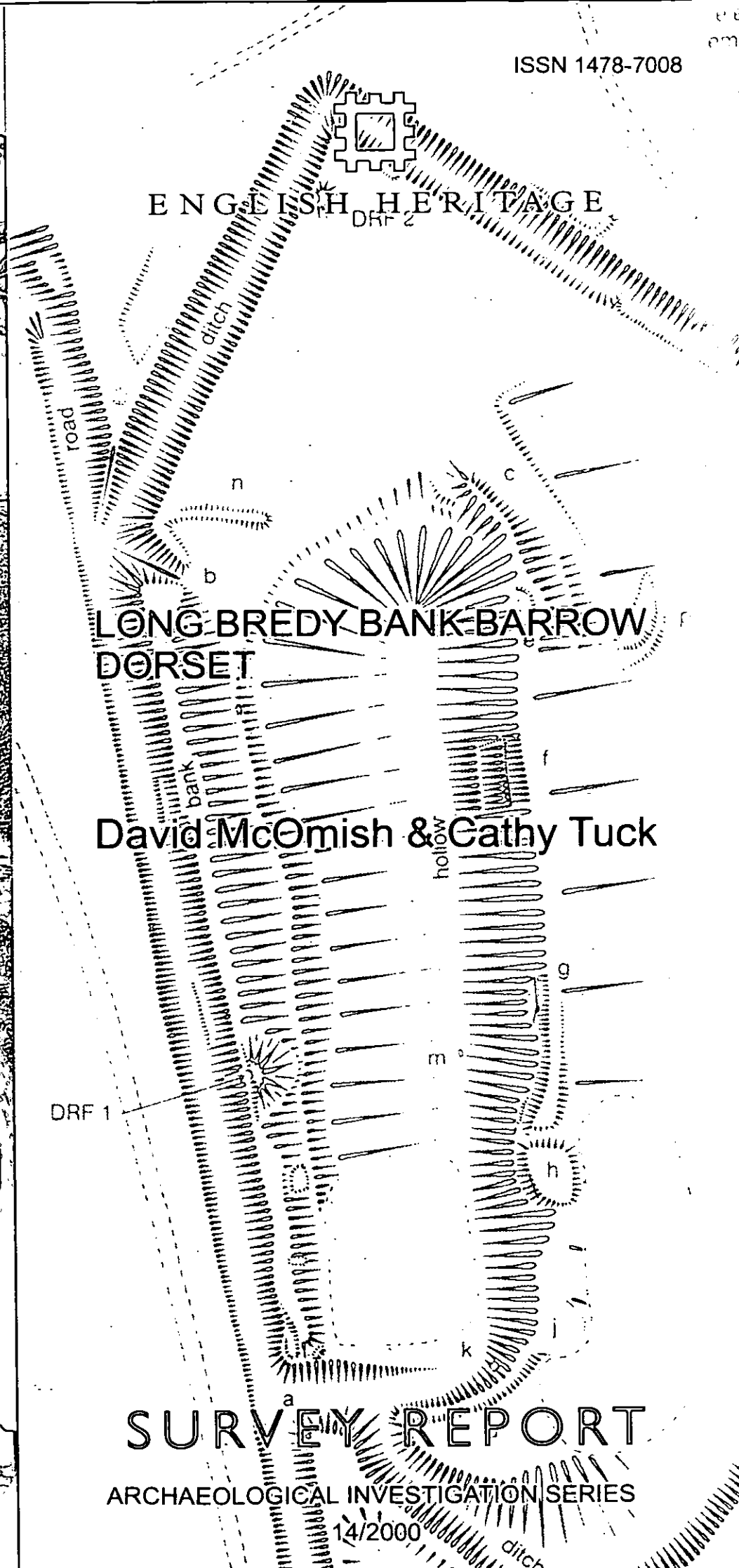


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LONG BREDEY BANK BARROW
DORSET

David McOmish & Cathy Tuck

SURVEY REPORT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION SERIES

14/2000

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AI/14/2000



ENGLISH HERITAGE

LONG BREDY BANK BARROW
LONG BREDY
DORSET

NMR Nos: SY 59 SE 27, 31, 34, 44-5, 88, 98-101, 114-5

Report by: David McOmish and Cathy Tuck
Survey by: David McOmish and Cathy Tuck
Drawings by: David McOmish
Field photography by: Cathy Tuck

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Cambridge Office: Brooklands, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge. CB2 2BU
Tel: 01223 324010 Fax: 01223 311203 e-mail: cambridge@rchme.co.uk

Headquarters: National Monuments Record Centre, Great Western Village, Kemble Drive, Swindon. SN2 2GZ
Tel: 01793 414700 Fax: 01793 414707 e-mail: info@rchme.gov.uk Internet: <http://www.rchme.gov.uk>



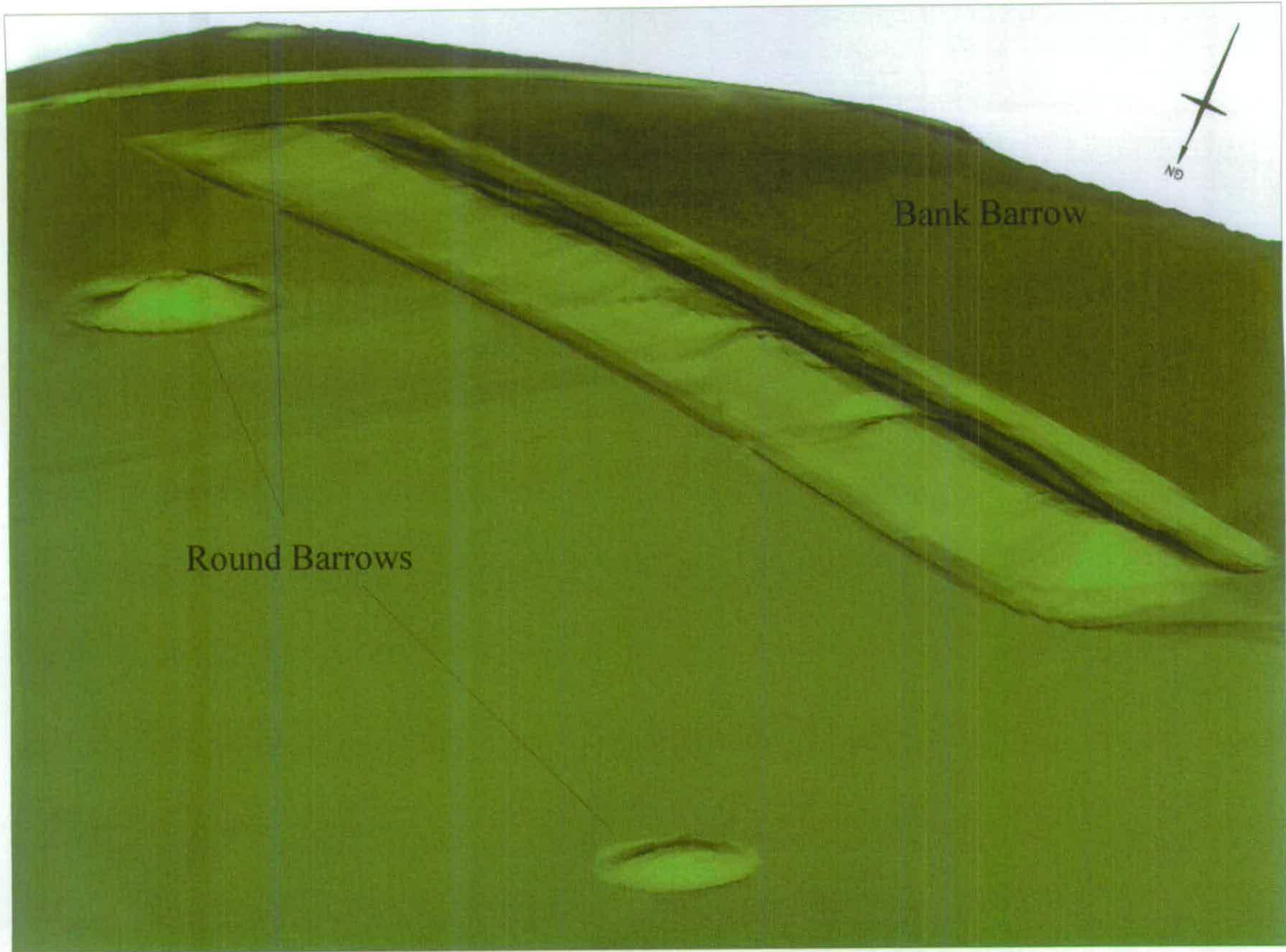
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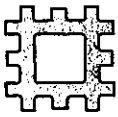
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Frontispiece: *Digital terrain model of the bank barrow and associated round barrows at Long Bredy, Dorset*



1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY

During March 2000, staff from the Brooklands Avenue office of English Heritage carried out a field investigation of a bank barrow and its environs, on Long Barrow Hill, Long Bredy, Dorset. Long Barrow Hill, which forms part of a wider area of downland known as Martin's Down, lies 1km to the north of the village of Long Bredy, in the parish of the same name and the district of West Dorset. The bank barrow on which the investigation focused is centred at National Grid Reference SY 5716 9115. The analytical field survey was undertaken as part of the first phase work associated with the *Cursus Enclosures and Bank Barrows: Britain and Beyond* project (known as CEBAB). The aim of this work is to 'better the understanding of the nature of the specific monument type' (Exploring our Past, 1998, 35), in this case cursus enclosures, but with a desire to record surviving examples of bank barrows, themselves characterised by elongated mounds and side ditches, and presenting an obviously shared morphology with cursus enclosures. The project is aimed at providing an academic overview of these monument classes and addresses a variety of related issues including monument management, protection, threats and vulnerability. Ultimately, the project will support the MPP by providing data which will help to define and refine constraint areas for scheduling and future management.

The principal monuments on the summit of Long Barrow Hill (Fig 1) are the Long Bredy bank barrow; a presumed long barrow; an arc of bank, which might represent another earlier burial mound or incomplete cursus; the western terminal of a cursus enclosure; seven round barrows; a cross-ridge boundary; and a later marl pit and associated earthworks which overlie the cursus enclosure. All but two components within the survey area are protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Dorset 145a-h); the cursus enclosure remains unscheduled as does the C-shaped earthwork to the north of the bank barrow. They are, however, recorded in the National Monuments Record (NMR) as SY 59 SE 27, 34, 88, 85, 44-5, 98-101 and 115, 31 and 114 respectively. All of the earthworks within the immediate environs of the bank barrow were surveyed at a scale of 1:1000. The investigation of all the remains was carried out at Level 3 standard (as defined in RCHME 1999, 3-4), and covered a total area of 12 hectares.

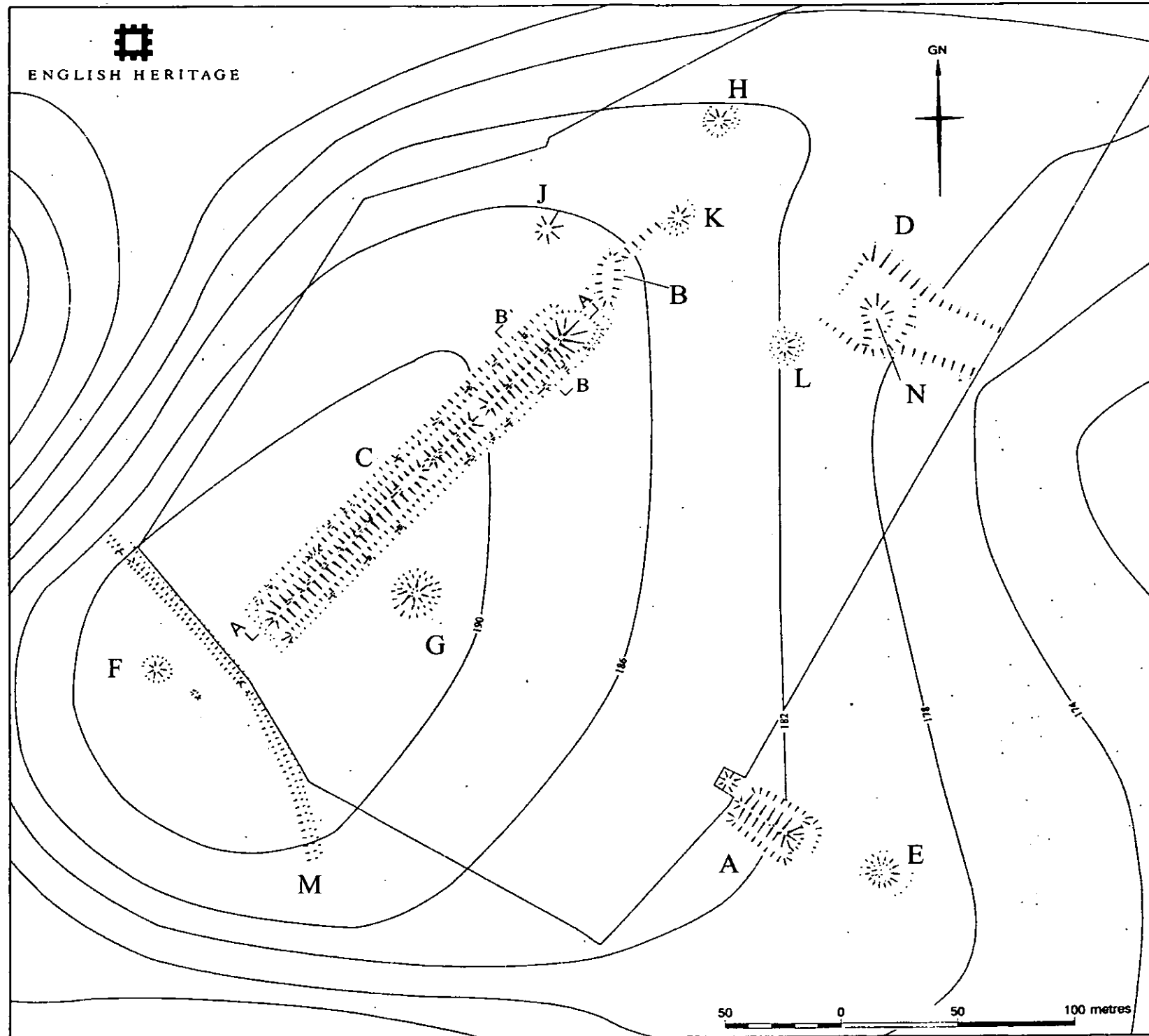
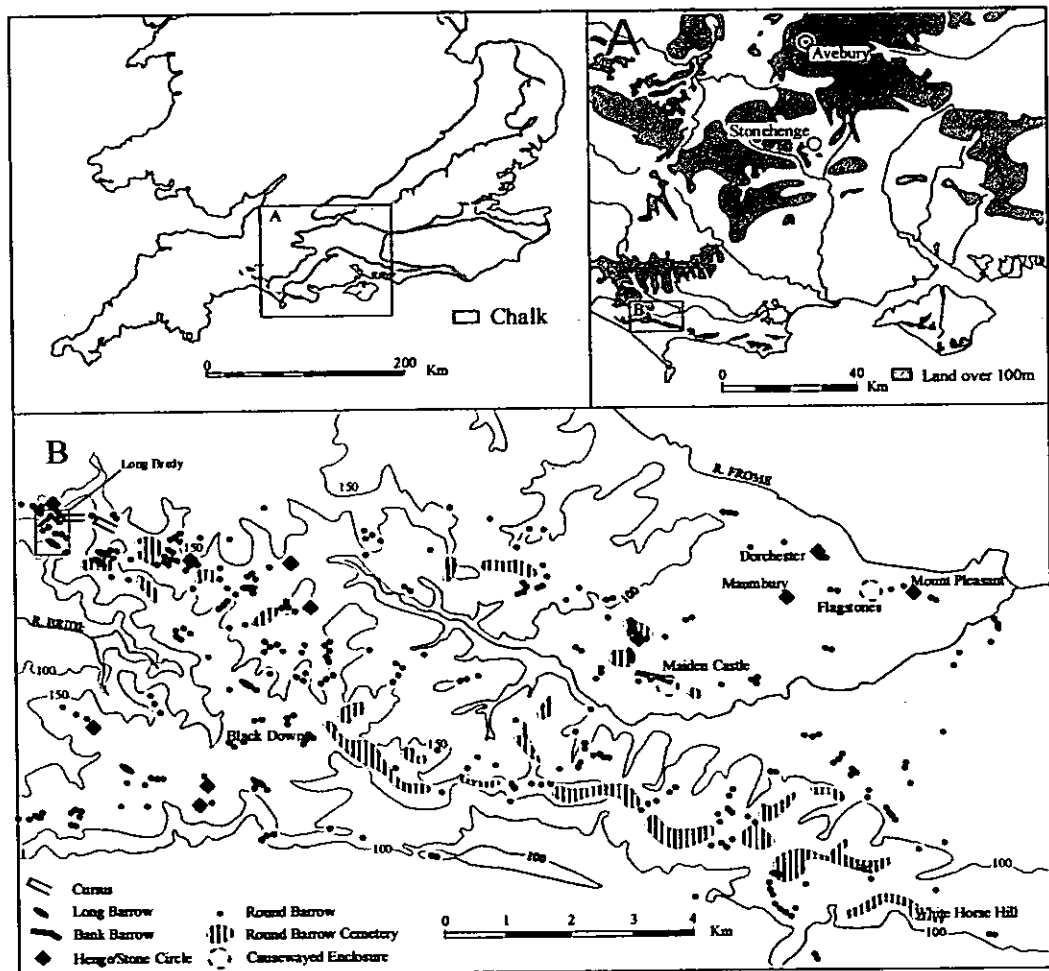


Figure 1:
*Detailed plan of the
earthworks on Long
Barrow Hill, Long
Bredy, Dorset*



2. GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY AND LAND USE

Long Barrow Hill reaches an altitude of 195m above Ordnance Datum (OD), and commands extensive views in all directions. It lies at the western end of the South Dorset Ridgeway, a pronounced natural anticline 16km in length aligned roughly north-west – south-east, which forms the southernmost outcropping of chalk in southern England (Fig 2). Woodward (1983) has divided the upland zone of this Ridgeway into four areas, namely, east, central, west and south-west. The sites discussed here are part of the west Ridgeway, which extends for a distance of 4km, from Black Down to Martin's Down.



On the north, the escarpment edge is poorly defined and here the topography gives way to much more gently undulating countryside irregularly dissected by now dry valleys. To



the south the heavily scalloped southern escarpment edge of the Ridgeway leads in a south-easterly direction towards Weymouth Harbour some 15km distant. This south-facing escarpment edge is further characterised by projecting spurs resulting from the sapping back of former springs, which are generally aligned approximately north-south.

The bank barrow and its attendant structures sit on a marked isolated knoll at the western end of the Ridgeway with precipitous scarps evident on all but the eastern side (the ridge top approach). Indeed, the disposition of the monuments on Long Barrow Hill has clearly been influenced by the topography of this knoll; the axis of the bank barrow, for example, follows that of the natural topography so that the ground falls sharply to the north west along the barrow's longitudinal axis. From the ridge top summit there is a fall off of some 90m to the dry valley (Long Bredy Hut Lane) immediately to the west, with much lesser descents on all other sides.

The Ridgeway scarps steeply to the south, down to a rough undulating coastal plain dominated by heavy clay soils and so, in a sense, it can be regarded as a boundary dividing two distinct environments – the littoral and its upland chalk hinterland.

It is an arid environment with only one major watercourse, the River Bride, in close proximity. This flanks the southern edge of the Ridgeway, 1.5km to the south of the site, and feeds into the English Channel at Bridport. To the north, the Ridgeway is delimited by the South Winterborne valley which is dry in the vicinity of the monuments and the stream of which rises in the village of Winterbourne Abbas, 5km to the east.

Geologically the area is dominated by chalk with outcrops of Lower, Middle and Upper along the length of the Ridgeway. This has given rise to the very distinctive chalkland morphology of broad and, predominantly, dry valleys with projecting interfluvial shelves as well as level shelving. In places the chalk ridge is capped with Eocene sands and gravels but for much of its extent it is covered by a thin chalk rendzina soil cover. In addition, there are deeper brown earths, clay-with-flints and pebbly clay with sand, and on the southern flank leading to the coastal plain, Jurassic clays and shales. The entire area investigated is currently grazed by sheep and is under managed pasture. Until recently, however, the shallow chalk soils here were extensively exploited for cereal production with the use of chemical fertilisers. The land is currently privately owned but there is good access available along Public Footpaths that traverse the area.



3. HISTORY OF RESEARCH

The first large-scale plans of the bank barrow and associated earthworks on Long Barrow Hill were made in 1885 as part of the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition Series (Fig 3). This

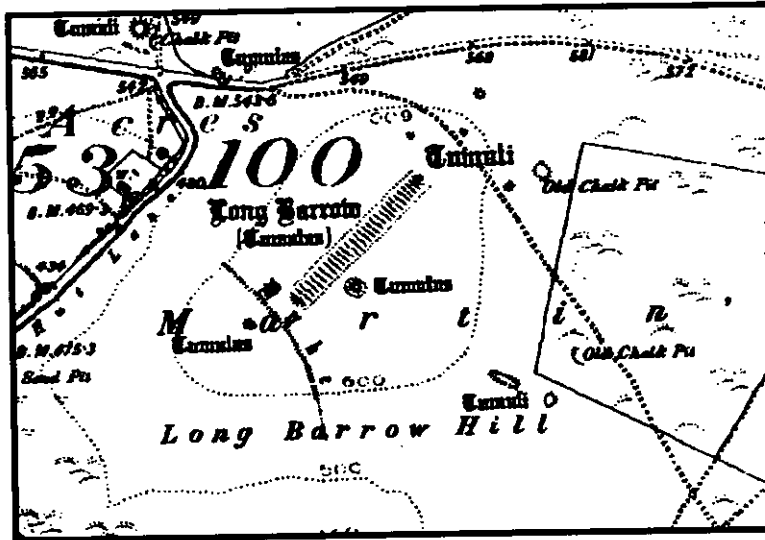
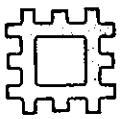


Figure 3:
The Ordnance
Survey 1st edition
of 1885

showed the full extent of the bank barrow without any apparent interruptions along its course. The long barrow to the south-east is shown but called 'Tumuli' as are the seven round barrows, and the full length of the cross-ridge boundary is depicted. The marl pit is named as the 'Old Chalk Pit', one

of a number in the area and the hill is in pasture. At this time the bank barrow was described as 'Long Barrow', a description that stuck until the work of OGS Crawford some 30 years later. Crawford's annotated record map of 1924 shows not only the bank barrow but also an L-shaped bank immediately to the north-east and on the same alignment, but with an angle change 30m along its length. However, it wasn't until his paper of 1938 that he finally coined the term 'bank barrow' for this and other similar sites. In this he drew upon evidence from the then recently excavated long mound at Maiden Castle, survey at Long Bredy and Broadmayne and close continental analogues from the Schleswig-Holstein area of Germany. As part of the same survey, notes were made of the other monuments on Long Barrow Hill including an additional long barrow of the 'ordinary' type and a group of eight round barrows as well as the cross-ridge boundary (Crawford 1938).



Successive Ordnance Survey revisions of the area took place in 1901 and 1931-3 with a further assessment by Norman Quinnell in May 1955, each showing the successive damage wrought by continued cultivation on the ridge top.

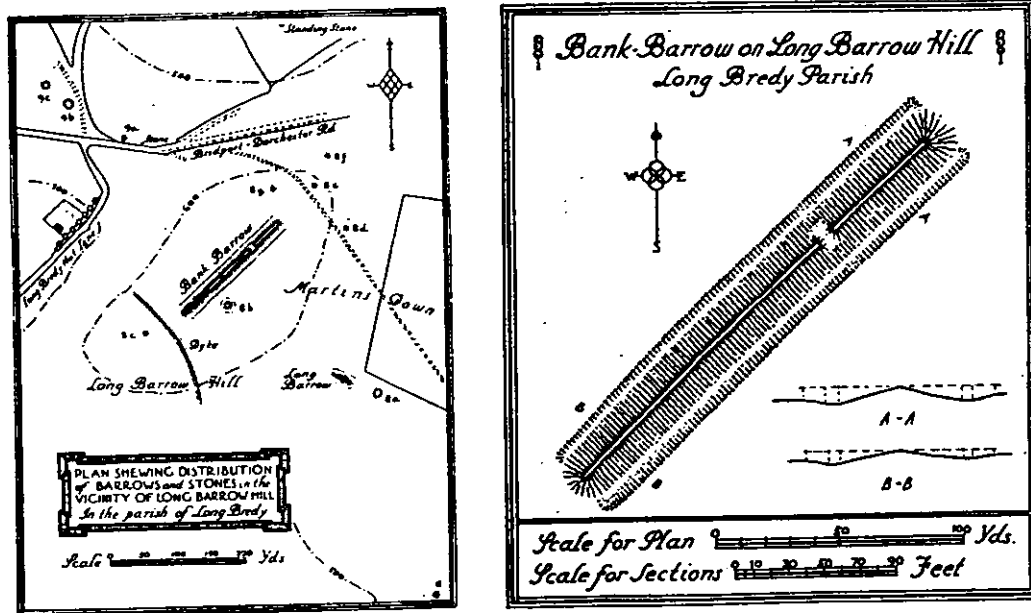


Figure 4:
RCHM area plan
of 1952 and
detail of bank
barrow on Long
Barrow Hill.

The RCHM Dorset Inventory of 1952 (RCHM 1952, 41-2) dealt with the monuments on Long Barrow Hill in little detail. Two plans were depicted (Fig 4): one showing the general arrangement of surviving earthworks in the vicinity of the bank barrow, namely the long barrow, seven round barrows and a 'dyke' (cross-ridge boundary); the other depicts, in detail, the bank barrow alone (here given the suffix Long Bredy 8). This early survey work noted that the axis of the mound displays a slight deviation and that its course is disturbed by a gap close to the north-eastern end. Neither the minor gap to the south-west nor the possibility that there may be an earlier core mound to the barrow were discussed. Two sections across the mound were drawn and one of these 'B-B', clearly shows its asymmetrical nature, with a deeper ditch and wider berm on the south-eastern flank. There was little discussion of the monument grouping on the ridge here and little attempt to put it into a regional context.

A later RCHME inventory (RCHME 1970, 426-8) does, however, conclude that the majority of the South Dorset Ridgeway was the site of an extended barrow group composed of at least 233 monuments further sub-divided into fourteen clusters. This gives one of the highest densities of round barrows in the British Isles, 10 barrows per 2.5 sq km; a figure only bettered by the area around Stonehenge. It was observed that these were contained within one particular stretch between the bank barrow on Long Barrow Hill and that at Broadmayne 12 km to the south-east. This account notes that the bank

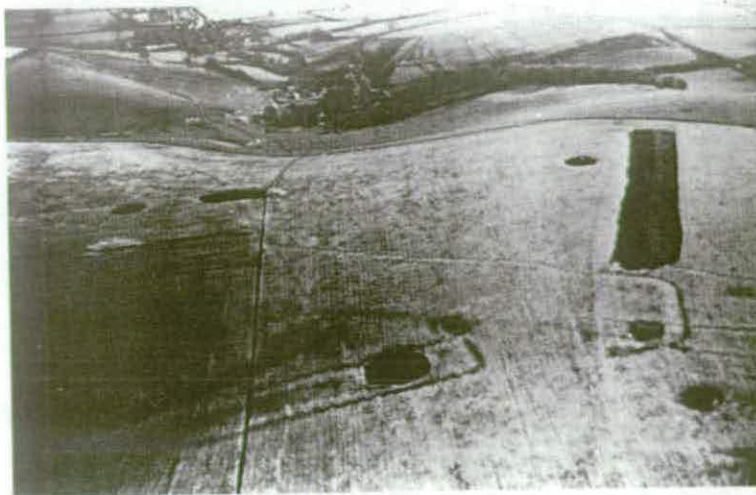


barrow on Martin's Down (Long Bredy) is dramatically sited at a natural topographical break and, furthermore, that this length of the Ridgeway was of significance before it became studded with round barrows. The RCHME account also makes a 'conceptual' connection between the linear aspect of long and bank barrows, and cursus enclosures with that of the Ridgeway and also with the ridge-like appearance of many the monuments. In this assessment, all of this activity was suggestive of continuity between the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods.

Bradley was the first to suggest that the break in the line of the mound close to the north-eastern terminal might mark the junction between two phases of construction (1983, 16). There is a suggestion (not made explicitly in the case of Long Bredy by Bradley), however, that bank barrows may have developed from earlier long barrows, as at Maiden Castle. Roger Peers' aerial photograph of the Long Bredy bank barrow (Fig 5), taken in 1971 when the downs had been ploughed, possibly for the first time in decades, shows the terminal of a cursus enclosure close to the bank barrow as well the earthwork

(which here is clearly C-shaped) at the northern end of the bank barrow. The terminal of the enclosure had been recorded earlier by Bailey (1971, 168) who had avoided using the term 'cursus', but an anticipated excavation failed to materialise.

Figure 5:
Aerial photograph of Long Barrow Hill after ploughing in 1971, showing the surviving earthworks, the ploughed out C-shaped earthwork and the western terminal of a cursus enclosure. ©Roger Peers





Additional aerial photographs taken in 1972 depicted a possible second cursus enclosure some 400m to the east of the bank barrow (Fig 6). Ploughing across this led to further

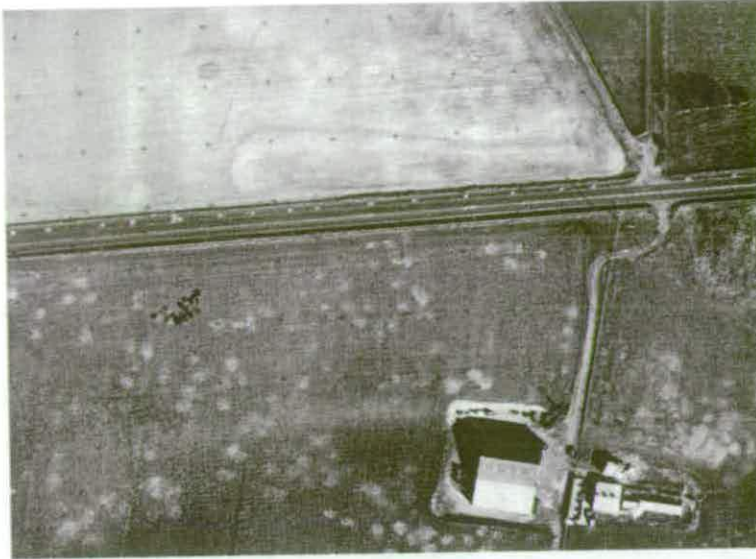


Figure 6:
Aerial photograph taken in 1972 showing a second cursus enclosure 400m to the east of the bank barrow. © Roger Peers

investigation (Bailey 1984, 134-7) but results from the two small trenches dug across the ditch boundary proved inconclusive. The ditch reached a maximum depth of 0.7m but was heavily truncated by ploughing; the excavators suggesting that the feature marked the

line of a pre-turnpike road depicted on an estate map of 1765. This seems unlikely given the pronounced western terminal to the enclosure, a point noted by Bailey, and a cursus enclosure does remain the best hypothesis.

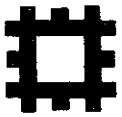
After heavy ploughing in 1988, a number of human bones, including long bones were found at SY 5730 9122, in an area immediately to the north-east of the bank barrow, close to the C-shaped earthwork (Rochfort 1988, 142). Fieldwalking here as part of Woodward's South Dorset Ridgeway project (Woodward 1991) has also produced a wide range of lithic material including a polished 'mace-head', flaked axe, 30 scrapers, a number of flint cores and large quantities of struck flint. The character of this assemblage suggests an Early Neolithic date but as part of an activity zone which lies on the periphery of the main settlement areas. This interpretation is based, primarily, on the limited nature of the assemblage which includes low core to flake ratios and a low percentage of blades in the waste flake (ibid, 33).

Thomas (1996, 190) suggests that rather than marking specific territories the alignment of the bank barrow on Long Barrow Hill was designed to channel movement in a particular fashion along the ridge. In this he links the barrow with the two cursus enclosures suggesting that their alignment, too, reflected a proscribed route of approach towards the long mound. The implications of Thomas's argument are clear: the bank barrow pre-dates the cursus enclosures.



These ideas have been developed by Tilley (1999) who commented that the bank barrow acts as a barrier, physical and symbolic, to movement east - west along the ridge, and additionally marks one of its highest points. Furthermore, he makes a metaphorical linkage between the Ridgeway and the nearby Chesil Beach, one of the most striking natural coastal formations along the British coastline, which was designed to link the topographies of the chalk ridge and the beach into a connected and symbolic system (Tilley 1999, 237).

The fieldwork carried out by English Heritage during March 1999 was the most thorough and extensive investigation of the surviving archaeology on this ridge top up to that date and the monuments, as well as their general context, are described and analysed in this report.



4. DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EARTHWORKS

Summary

The earliest identifiable earthwork component on Long Barrow Hill, is the long barrow which lies 200m to the south-west of the bank barrow. The long barrow is undated but on analogy with excavated examples in the vicinity, a date of construction and use before 3000 BC should be expected (see Barrett et al 1991, 53). The date for the bank barrow itself remains unknown. That at Maiden Castle belongs to the end of the 4th millennium BC with dates ranging from 3600 – 3110 BC (Sharples 1991, 103). This monument, of course, incorporates an earlier long barrow within its line and a similar sequence is suspected at Long Bredy, where two significant breaks on the mound, isolate a smaller segment 30m in length. The bank barrow is well preserved and does not appear to have been overploughed at any stage, although there is a small amount of quarrying (or perhaps antiquarian disturbance) along its crest; it is likely, therefore, that the current mound and ditch morphologies are relatively unscathed.

The cursus enclosure which lies to the south-east of the bank barrow was described as a 'sharp earthwork' in the 1970s (Bailey 1984, 134) but has been heavily plough eroded since then. Only the northern terminal survives and this has been further bitten into by the digging of a post-medieval marl pit. Once again, the enclosure is undated, but if a comparison can be made with the Dorset cursus (Barrett et al 1991, then dates of between 2800 and 2400 BC for its construction seem reasonable, thus making it possibly contemporary with the bank barrow – its alignment on the bank barrow suggests as much.

There are seven smaller round barrows in close proximity to the bank barrow; a cluster of four at the northern end, two isolated individuals lying close to the south-western end of the bank barrow and another, adjacent to the long barrow. None are as substantially constructed as the bank or long barrow, instead consisting of small circular mounds in the majority of cases encircled by a shallow ditch. Only one of the round barrows on the ridge top here is ditchless, but this may be due to its destruction through ploughing, as is happening to the other examples in the group. All are of the bowl type, though there is a suspicion that SY 59 SE 45 and 101 are heavily damaged examples of the bell variety.

A linear bank and ditch cut-off the spur to the south-west of the bank barrow at its narrowest point. Neither ends of this earthwork continue downslope for any distance beyond the main break of slope, and this configuration is typical of later prehistoric cross-ridge boundaries. These have a wide date range and there are well documented



Neolithic examples on Hambleton Hill, Dorset. Elsewhere, Vyner, has postulated a Late Neolithic – Early Bronze Age date for some of those on the North Yorkshire Moors (Vyner 1994), but the majority of cross-ridge boundaries are likely to belong to the late 1st millennium BC.

The downland on Long Barrow Hill appears to have been in pasture for the best part of two centuries. Ploughing has been restricted to a narrow but heavily destructive phase, initiated in *c.* 1971 and lasting for 20 or so years. During this time many of the slighter monuments have been seriously damaged, in particular the cursus enclosure closest to the bank barrow and the C-shaped mound at its northern terminal; in addition, many of the round barrows have been clipped by the plough. All of the monuments now lie in stable but heavily cropped pasture.

In the following sections, the remains are described in broadly chronological order, corresponding to the conjectural sequence outlined in this summary.

The Monuments

Long Barrow (Fig 1, A)

NGR: SY 5733 9099. NMR: SY 59 SE 34

This short long barrow lies on ground sloping gently to the south-east, some 28.0m below the highest point of Long Barrow Hill (Fig 7). It is oriented *c.* 10° north of east–west and

consists of a central mound flanked by well-preserved side ditches.



Figure 7:
View to the south-east along the line of the long barrow (DP000035)

The mound extends for a length of 36.0m, ranging from 12-14m in width at its base, to a crest 2-3m wide and is noticeably higher and wider at



the eastern end where it stands to a height of 2.0m above ground level.

The ditches survive to a depth of 0.5m below ground level and are 4-5m wide with a reduced width of 2-3m at the base. Both ditches run parallel to the mound; that on the south for a distance of 35.0m with well preserved terminals. The northern example is shorter at 30.0m but a shallow scarp 0.2m high extends the outer lip of this ditch around the eastern end of the mound suggesting that the ditch may have once been continuous around this section of the barrow; a configuration which recalls better known examples on the Cranborne Chase, Dorset, 15km to the north-east (Barrett et al 1991, 53).

C-shaped Earthwork (Fig 1, B)

NGR: 5730 9122. NMR: SY 59 SE 88

This L-shaped bank lies immediately to the north of the bank barrow and extends for an overall length of 45.0m towards the nearby round barrow (SY 59 SE 100). It has been heavily over-ploughed but consists of a low mound 15.0m wide which survives to a height of 0.2m. No extensions to the east were noted on the ground but aerial photographs show that the earthwork is C-shaped with angular corners and is accompanied by an external ditch (Fig 5). Shallow lines of ditch extend in a parallel fashion to the south-east but the association between these 'side ditches' and the mound is not definite and there remains the possibility that the ditches are later hollow ways ascending the downs here, before the tumpiking of the present road in the 18th century.

This earthwork is undoubtedly the feature noted by OGS Crawford (Annotated 6th Record Map 1924) and which he described as being L-shaped and accompanied by a ditch. Woodward (1983) describes the feature as a possible long barrow, based on partially visible remains on a RAF 1947 aerial photograph. In addition, both Woodford (1983) and Rochfort (1988) comment on the discovery of human bones close to the mound. The earthwork is not the remains of a long barrow – this is made clear by Peers's aerial photograph taken in 1971. Instead, it closely resembles the enlarged terminal of a cursus enclosure and is best viewed as a variant of this form of monument. Both the Long Bredy cursus and bank barrow focus on it, so there is strong possibility that it pre-dates both.



The Bank Barrow (Fig 1, C)

NGR: 5716 9115. NMR SY 59 SE 27

The mound is oriented north-east – south-west, 46° east of north, and consists of a central bank flanked on either side by ditches, neither of which encircles the ends of the mound. On first appearance the mound looks to be straight but survey has shown that there is a slight change in orientation, to a more south-easterly alignment, close to its midpoint. The mound survives for a length of 195.0m and appears to be composed of three constituent parts:

i) A central core mound 32.0m in length, 10.0m wide standing to a height of 3.0m above ditch bottom. It has a flattened profile in cross-section with a very level crest. A pronounced gap 3.0m wide and 1.5m deep separates it from the mound continuation to the north-east; that to the south-west is less well defined but, nonetheless, an interruption some 1.5m wide and 0.7m deep can be seen along the length of the mound.

ii) The north-eastern addition comprises the most substantial component of the barrow with a mound 60.0m in length (Fig 8). It varies between 10.0 and 12.0m in width but close to its north-eastern terminal it swells out to a width of 16.0m; in profile it resembles a long barrow. This section of the mound is very flat-topped at



Figure 8:
View to the north-east along the crest of the bank barrow.
(DP000036)

3-4m wide with a level longitudinal profile (Fig 9). Indeed, the enlarging of the mound on the north-east, at a point where the natural topography is dropping away, ensures that a largely levelled (and prominent) mound crest is apparent. This must have been part of a deliberate attempt to maintain a prominent side-on view and compensate for the natural slope declivity.

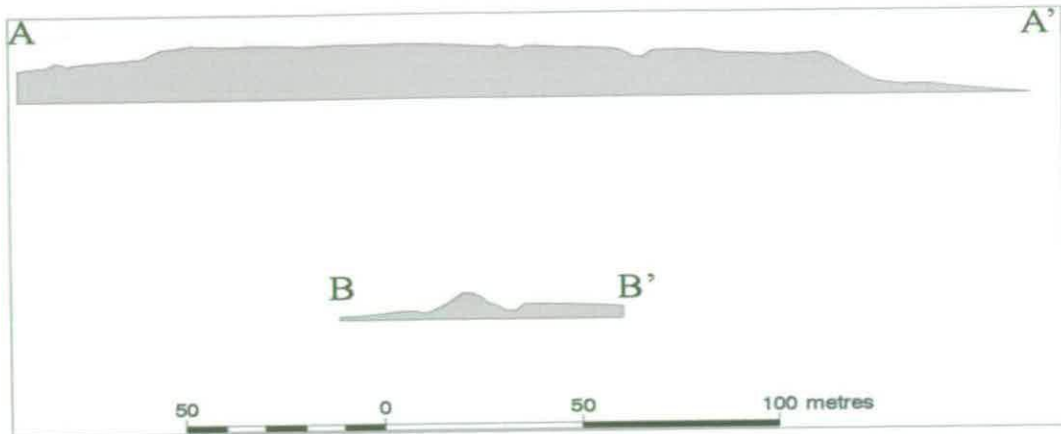


Figure 9:
*Sections across the
Long Bredy bank
barrow*

iii) The south-western tail extends for a length of 102.0m and stands to a height of 2-3m

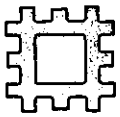


Figure 10:
*View to the
south-west along
the crest of the
bank barrow.
(DP000037)*

above ditch bottom and 2.0m above ground level (Fig 10). At its base the mound varies between a width of 9 and 12m but at the swollen southern terminal the width reaches 14.0m without any noticeable accompanying

heightening of the bank. Once again the crest is flattened, up to 3.0m wide, and although a fairly level platform is attained, minor undulations mark its summit. These may result from later damage, unassociated with the original use of the monument and, indeed, the terminal of this mound close to the central core has been affected either by small-scale digging or rabbit burrows.

The accompanying side ditches run parallel to the mound and are well preserved, though modern ploughing has encroached on their outer lips, but sufficient survives to suggest that each attained a maximum width of 7.0m narrowing to a minimum basal width of 2.0m. The ditches, which are continuous, are deeper at their northern ends where they reach depths of 1.5m, elsewhere, the ditch depth varies between 0.5 and 1.0m. Both ditches attain their maximum dimensions at the north-eastern limit of the monument and it may be that deeper digging here was required to provide the necessary greater bulk of



material for the mound. Neither ditch extends around the mound terminal; shallow scarps in these areas flanking the mound result from later ploughing. The base of each ditch is marked by small steps and other minor interruptions surviving to a height of 0.3m at best, again the more substantial scarps are found in the northern segments of the ditches. Here, it is noticeable that the ditch scarps either side of the mound are paired. This could give rise to the suggestion that ditch digging was done by separate work gangs, and in an ordered fashion; each segment varied between a length of 10 and 20m. There is also some suggestion, therefore, that in its final form, the side ditches were dug before the construction of the elongated barrow mound.

The barrow mound does not take up all of the available ground between the ditches instead, there is a clear berm on either side above the ditch. This varies between 2 and 3m in width on the east but is absent on the eastern face of the northern terminal where the body of the mound appears to have collapsed and spilled into the ditch. A slightly wider berm is evident on the western face, up to 5.0m wide in places and cross-section of the monument point to an asymmetrical profile with narrower berm and more sharply defined mound face on the east. From outer ditch lip to outer ditch lip, the barrow is 30.0m at its widest, close to the north-eastern terminal.

Cursus Enclosure (Fig 1, D)

NGR: SY 5732 9122. NMR: SY 59 SE 85

The western end of a cursus enclosure lies at the head of a dry valley that extends to the east for some 300.0m. An externally facing scarp, probably the surviving outer face of a former bank, which survives best on the northern side, defines the enclosure now. Here, only a section 72.0m in length is extant and this stands to a height of between 0.1 and 0.3m above ground surface. At its western end, a narrow scarp extends in a right angle to the south for a distance of 25.0m; this presumably marks the western terminal of the cursus enclosure. The southern line of the cursus is marked by a scarp 30.0m in length that stands to a height of 0.3m. It is a narrow enclosure no more than 35.0m in width and has been heavily damaged by ploughing; all aboveground remains have been erased to the east of the modern fence boundary.

The south-western corner of the cursus enclosure has been removed by the digging of a marl pit (SY 59 SE 114).



The cursus, which is one of a pair (the other, lies approximately 200.0m to the north-east), sits some 20.0m below the summit of the ridge on an alignment which ignores that of both the Ridgeway and the natural eminence of Long Barrow Hill. The cursus does, however, have a strong association with the dry valley that extends to the east from Long Barrow Hill, and follows the line of this for a distance of 200.0m to an unknown terminal further to the north-east, perhaps on the level ridge below Long Barrow Hill, which hosts the sister cursus (Fig 11).

Figure 11:
*View eastwards
along the dry valley
which hosted the
cursus enclosure
closest to the bank
barrow.*
(DP000038)



Aerial photographs show both cursûs, each with formal western terminals but open to the east (Figs 5 and 6). Perhaps significantly, the axis of the Long Bredy cursus is not precisely aligned on the bank barrow. Instead,

the cursus channels views (?and movement) to an area immediately to the north-east of the bank barrow, particularly, the C-shaped earthwork.

Bowl Barrow (Fig 1, E)

NGR: SY 5737 9097. NMR: SY 59 SE 101

This badly damaged bowl barrow lies 30.0m to the south-east of long barrow (SY59 SE 34) on ground which gently slopes to the south-east. The mound is 15.0m in diameter at its base narrowing to a flat-topped summit 8.0m wide. This appears to have been quarried into; the edge of the quarrying is now defined by a narrow ledge 1-2m wide which is apparent on all but the south-west arc. It is encircled by a ditch for a distance of 20.0m on the north-west and for a shorter length of 14.0m on the south-east. These ditches which range from 1 – 4.0m in width are up to 0.2m deep and have been heavily damaged by recent ploughing.



Bowl Barrow (Fig 1, F)

NGR: SY 5705 9106. NMR: SY 59 SE 44

This circular bowl barrow lies 25.0m to the south-west of the cross-ridge boundary (SY 59 SE 31) in a very prominent and central position on the ridge. From here there are panoramic views not only of the monuments on Long Barrow Hill but also of the coastal plain to the south and further south-east, along the Ridgeway. The circular barrow mound is 8.0m in diameter at its base, and stands to a height of 0.5m above ground level. It is completely encircled by a ditch 1-2.0m wide and up to 0.2m deep

?Bowl/Bell Barrow (Fig 1, G)

NGR: SY 5717 9110. NMR: SY 59 SE 45

This the largest of the round barrows on the ridge top and sits on gently south-east facing ground to the east of the bank barrow but close to its southern terminal. It affords good views to the east but when viewed from these areas the barrow mound is indistinguishable from the main body of the bank barrow mound. The circular barrow mound has been heavily pitted by antiquarian investigation (of which no record now survives) and stands to a height of 0.7m above ground level. It is 19.0m wide at the base narrowing to a summit diameter of 6.0m and a shallow berm 1-2.0m wide can be seen on all but the south-western arc. This raises speculation that the barrow, previously classified as a bowl, may in fact be a bell barrow. It remains difficult to be categorical about this as recent ploughing may have created the ledge. This ploughing has softened the line of the ditch that surrounds the mound and which is now in places as shallow as 0.1m. On the uphill side the ditch is relatively well preserved and survives to a depth of 0.3m and is up to 2.0m wide at its mouth.

Bowl Barrow (Fig 1, H)

NGR: SY 5722 9126. NMR: SY 59 SE 98

This is a heavily damaged bowl barrow which consists of an oval shaped mound 11.0m in diameter at its base, narrowing to a crest 4.0m wide, which stands 0.4m above ground level. Cultivation has cut into the mound on all sides and consequently a plough ledge has been created. This is best seen on the southern ellipse of the mound where it survives to a



width of 3.0m. This ploughing has also interrupted the line of the ditch enclosing the barrow mound and it only survives intermittently to a maximum width of 2.0m and a depth of 0.2m. The barrow sits in a very prominent position with good views to and from it from the north, east and west. Indeed, it overlooks the now dry valley to the north. In contrast, views to the south are much more restricted.

Bowl Barrow (Fig 1, J)

NGR: SY 5728 9126. NMR SY 59 SE 99.

The mound has been heavily over-ploughed and now survives as a slightly oval tump 17.0m in length on its longest, north-east – south-west, axis. It stands to a height of 0.3m and is 6.0m wide at its summit. There is no surrounding ditch. The barrow offers good views to the west and north but again has a restricted view to the south.

Bowl Barrow (Fig 1, K)

NGR: SY 5733 9130. NMR: SY 59 SE 115

Bowl barrow that lies some 50.0m to the north-east of the bank barrow consists of a sub-square mound 11.0m wide and 9.0m broad standing to a height of 0.5m. The narrow summit of the mound is 5.0m wide and has been dug into, possibly through (undocumented) antiquarian investigation, and ploughing has again heavily encroached upon the mound so that a slight lip survives on its southern arc. A plough-widened ditch survives on all but the western side and to a depth of 0.2m. Like its near neighbours, this barrow commands extensive views to and from the north, west and east, but is in a relatively closed location when considering views to the south.

Bowl Barrow (Fig 1, L)

NGR: SY 5734 9121. NMR: SY 59 SE 100

This bowl barrow sits close to the south-western corner of the cursus terminal and at the head of the dry valley which leads to the north-east. From this valley, the barrow would



have been a prominent landmark and from it there are extensive views along the Ridgeway to the west. The barrow has been damaged by modern ploughing but the central mound still survives to a height of 0.4m above ground level. Plough encroachment has created a berm 1-3m around the mound which is now 10.0m wide at its base but which would have been up to 15.0m wide before the onset of plough damage. The mound is encircled by a ditch 2.0m wide and 0.2m deep.

Cross-ridge Boundary (Fig 1, M)

NGR: SY 5711 9103. NMR: SY 59 SE 31

This linear boundary extends for a length of *c.* 170.0m across a narrow neck of land to the south-west of the bank barrow. This is at a point where the main Long Barrow Hill ridge, splits in two, with tangential ridges leading further to the south-west and south-east, respectively. The ridge at this point is approximately 130.0m wide but both ends of the cross-ridge boundary extend beyond the break of slope; that to the south for a distance of 30.0m, whilst the northern terminal extends for some 10.0m. The boundary consists of a single bank 2-4m wide and up to 0.4m high, flanked on the northern side by a shallow ditch 2.0m wide and 0.3m deep. Causeways close to the north-western limit and midway along its line are recent interruptions.

Marl Pit (Fig 1, N)

NGR: SY 5735 9122. NMR: SY 59 SE 114

This marl pit has been dug into the south-western corner of the cursus enclosure terminal (SY 59 SE 85) and survives as an elongated hollow, 20.0m in length on its longest, north-south axis, and 1.5m deep on the west where it cuts more deeply into the natural slope. The hollow is fringed by a curvilinear scarp *c.* 60.0m in length and 0.2m high.



5. DISCUSSION

The English Heritage survey has identified a dense concentration of earthworks belonging to the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age which attest to the importance of Long Barrow Hill, in both a ritual and sepulchral sense, for well over 2000 years.

The Earlier Neolithic

As has been stated the earliest monument here is the long barrow which, perhaps significantly, avoids the ridge top, though focuses relatively closely upon it. We are, of course, completely unaware of the non-monumental significance of this place and of activity here pre-dating the construction of the barrow and its use. But it is clear that the barrow has been carefully placed so as to be visible to a large, lower-lying area away from Martin Down, principally in the River Bride valley to the south. For those living in this valley, the barrow mound would have created a prominent focal point, possibly providing a strong sense of place and belonging for the local community. In addition, the axis of the barrow mound mirrors that of the Ridgeway at this point and this may have been a deliberate attempt to bind the barrow into the 'natural' Ridgeway thus making it seem immutable and part of the natural order. The construction of this early barrow and several others in the area, including a possible core to the Long Bredy bank barrow, established a common pattern of use on the Ridgeway for the next 2000 years. During this time no settlements are known in the vicinity of Long Bredy and all of the available fieldwalking evidence suggests that Neolithic settlement was concentrated away from the ridge-top. Instead, all of the monumental evidence points to a long-lived focus of burial and ritual activity in the area.

The long barrow with a length of only 28.0m, is particularly short example and recalls the distinctive morphology of individuals better noted in north-eastern Dorset, the so-called Cranborne Chase type (Ashbee 1984, 15). These are defined as a short, parallel sided, mound with side ditches which continue around one terminal so giving the characteristic U-shaped ditch plan (Barrett et al 1991). Bradley points out that these are often the earliest components in the sequence of construction of this form of burial structure, between 3210 and c. 2710 uncal BC on Cranborne Chase, with larger examples having a later date range (ibid, 36).

It has been suggested that the core mound at the heart of the Long Bredy bank barrow might also be considered as an earlier long barrow (Fig 12). This central portion extends

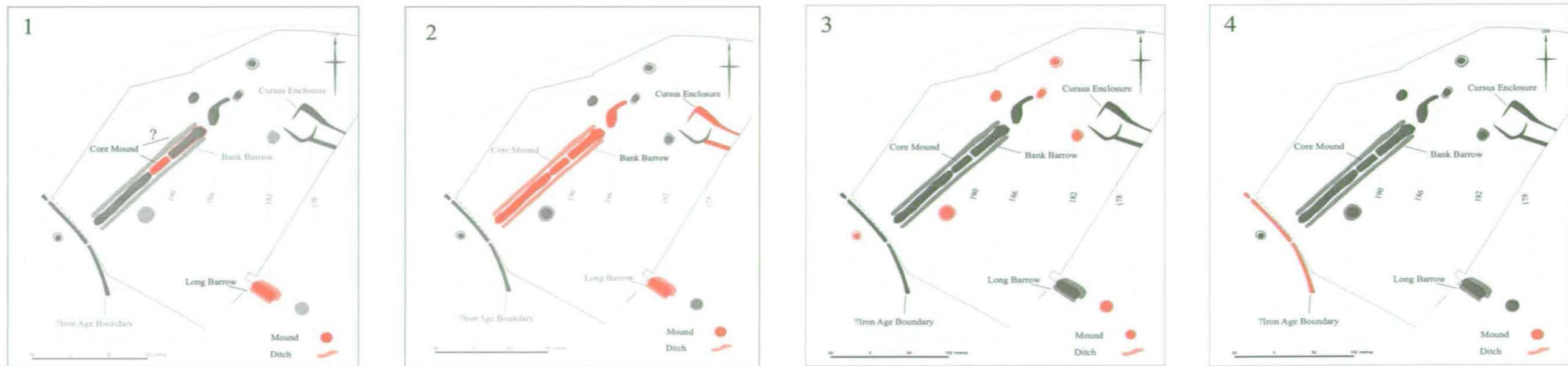
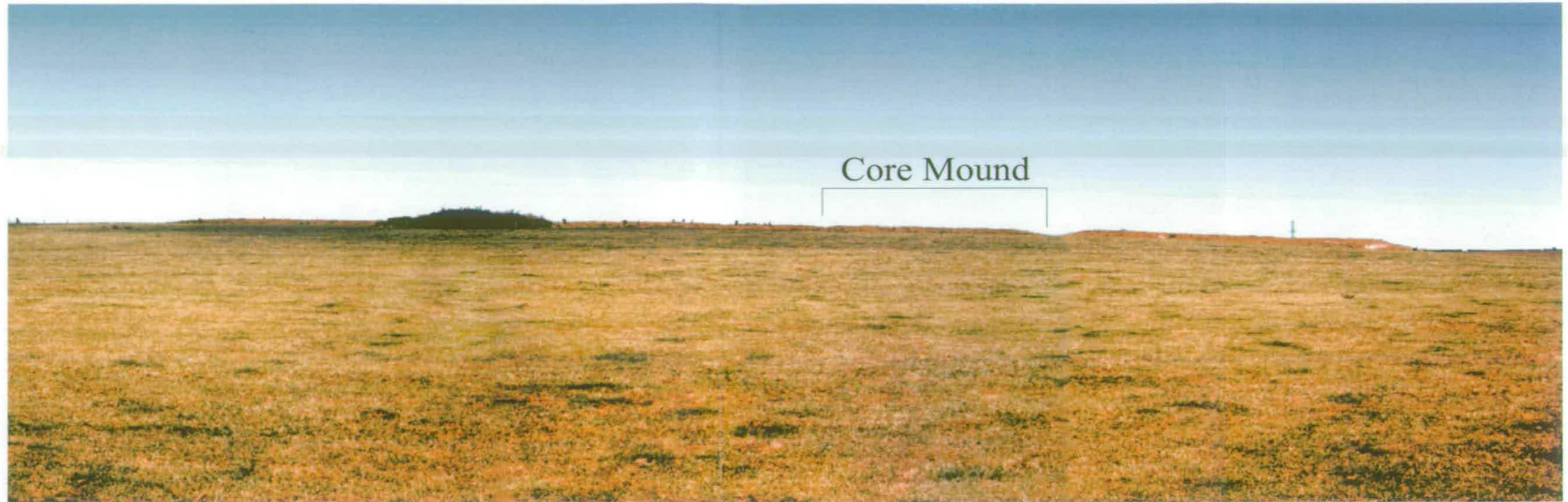


Figure 12:
A view of the bank barrow from the south-east showing the main interruptions along its length and a provisional interpretational sequence of the monuments on Long Barrow Hill. (DP000039)



for a length of 32.0m but is much narrower than the isolated long barrow 200m to the south. The flanking side ditches display no hint of having been re-worked along this section and so the major breaks in the line of the bank barrow are the only clues left to suggest that there was an earlier core to the monument; one that was subsequently added to. It is feasible, of course, that the primary component of the bank barrow is the northernmost section. This does indeed resemble, perhaps, the more typical long barrow morphology of elongated trapezoidal shaped mound with the wider 'business' end facing north-east.

The bank barrow occupies the highest point on the Long Barrow Hill and has been carefully constructed to be highly visible from the west and the Bride Valley to the south, as well as from the Winterborne further to the east. This location has been predetermined, in a sense, by the disposition of the earlier barrow mound but the placement and associated monumentality of the final earthwork must have resulted from deliberate intention on the part of the builders. The bank barrow at Long Bredy is massive, and it stands out not only in terms of its scale but also in the field of view it provides.

Although the barrow occupies a prominent location it cannot be seen from the lower lying areas and valleys immediately to the west and south. Of course, when approaching the knoll from the lower-lying areas off the ridge, the main monuments are invisible up to a very short distance from them; this creates a revelatory aspect (but only when approached from the west and south). Along the Ridgeway the views are more open and less interrupted by sharp changes in topography so that vistas to and from the monuments on Long Bredy would have been determined by the observer's relative altitude and the prevailing vegetational cover. There are 'channels of view' along flattened areas of the ridge or along dry valleys; and here the juxtaposition of dry valley at Long Barrow Farm with the bank barrow and, indeed, the C-shaped earthwork and the cursus, is a striking one.

The best views of the whole complex would have been afforded on Black Down (or in the general area of Black Down). Heading south eastwards from Long Bredy this is the next most prominent natural peak rising to a height of close to 190m. Views from Long Bredy further south-east would have been partly blocked by Black Down which itself plays host to a number of important contemporary burial monuments. From here, the bank barrow presents a massive visual barrier, which is enhanced by the 'side-on view'. The implications of this are clear: there was a clear manipulation of monumental construction and elaboration with a prominent natural eminence through which much of the visibility was articulated.



The position of the Long Bredy bank barrow must also have been carefully chosen to ensure its maximum visibility at different times of the day or year. Looking north-west along the Ridgeway from Black Down, for instance, the movement of the sun as it approached midsummer sunset, would have resulted in it dramatically merging with the bank barrow. For a short time the sun would have appeared to rest on the mound before disappearing behind it and from view, to be followed by darkness. This would appear to suggest that both the building and the use of the bank barrow had a meaning and importance which transcended the local community, contrasting with the earlier long barrows which are much more hidden away. The bank barrow sits in a very prominent position atop a knoll at a major break in the line of the South Dorset Ridgeway. The excessive monumentality of the barrow marks and draws attention to the termination of the natural ridge. So both the long and bank barrows bring a strong focus on prominent topographical features and by their careful placement become part of this natural arrangement. This point is made by Tilley who states that the bank barrows may have referenced topographic features of the South Dorset Ridgeway of major regional significance and universal mythological importance (Tilley 1999, 202). Such theatrical and architectural devices might well have been deliberately incorporated amongst the landscape of earth-built mounds and natural dips or ridges. It is plausible that the contrived settings related to the configurations of existing traditional pathways and locales which had been established since Mesolithic (?and before) times.

Tilley notes further that Long Bredy is the only barrow in the area from which the sea is visible looking south along its length. In fact, it is the western end of the Chesil Beach that is visible, a possibly deliberate juxtaposition, and Tilley has set out a scheme which symbolically intertwines the morphology of the South Dorset Ridgeway with that of the Chesil Beach. Here, the bank barrow became a metaphor for the natural structure and activities carried out on the site may have included directed movement, narrative, deposition of artefacts and bones, 'socialising persons and structuring knowledges...serving as tangible foci revitalising domains of personal and social experience....in short, it was through these monuments that people came to know and understand the landscape in which they lived (ibid, 205).

The cursus enclosure to the east of the bank barrow has a very much more closed aspect within its wider topographical setting. Here, the enclosure sits at the head of a now dry coombe leading to the east from Long Barrow Hill. This coombe links the Long Bredy knoll with the upper reaches of the Winterbourne valley and the cursus follows the course of this natural pathway. The cursus does not extend to the higher ground to the west, instead it terminates at a point where the dry valley is itself blending with the knoll – this intimate relationship has been carefully planned and does suggest that activities associated with the cursus involved movement along the dry valley to or from the knoll.



The alignment of this cursus and its near neighbour to the north, point to a focus on the general area of the ridge top hosting the bank barrow. Looking along the dry valley (to the west), the line of the cursus, and especially its terminal, would have been very prominent. Above and beyond this stood the bank barrow, forming a monumental backdrop. It is possible that the enclosures demarcated proscribed routes of approach, or view, to the hilltop and further suggest that there was already something of significance in this place. This may have been the bank barrow or a predecessor but the status of the C-shaped enclosure should not be overlooked here.

The C-shaped earthwork recalls a similar earthwork of Neolithic date at Court Hill, West Sussex (NMR: SU 81 SE 5), the function of which remains unknown, but which was presumably related to activity at the nearby causewayed enclosure (Bedwin 1984; Oswald et al forthcoming). The C-shaped bank and ditch at Long Bredy may be related to early Neolithic enclosures but it does also resemble, much more generally, cursus enclosure terminals. Often, these are given a monumentality greater than the remainder of the monument. Both the northern and southern terminals of the Dorset cursus are excessively monumental, and the same has been noted at Rudston 'A' as well as the Stonehenge Greater cursus. In a number of other sites, activity with the line of the cursus has been best noted at the terminals (eg Springfield, Holywood), so there is a strong association between cursus terminals and documented activity. It is suggested here, that the C-shaped earthwork may be a variant cursus. The 3-sided enclosure is open on the south-east, that side facing along the main axis of the South Dorset Ridgeway, and once again there are commanding views to and from the earthwork; its bank providing a suitable backdrop for activities within it.

The Later Neolithic

The monuments on Long Barrow Hill served as a focus for a later round barrow cemetery. There are at least seven round mounds on the hilltop and its slopes here and these form the westernmost part of one of the largest concentrations of round barrows in the British Isles. On the South Dorset Ridgeway there are in excess of 200 individual mounds, each set within a smaller grouping of which there are at least fourteen on the Ridgeway. The Long Barrow Hill grouping, which is separated by a natural trough 1km wide from its nearest neighbour on Black Down, is composed of three constituent parts. The most obvious of these is the grouping of four (it was five but one has been totally erased by ploughing) adjacent to the C-shaped earthwork. This dispersed cluster consists of 3 ditched and one unditched bowl barrows each placed so as to be clearly visible from the Ridgeway to the south-east, as well as further afield in the surrounding valleys. Two further round barrows, one bowl the other, potentially, a bell, lie close to the southern



terminal of the bank barrow; both, again, are prominently sited so as to be visible from the wider landscape. The final barrow, a bowl, sits adjacent to the long barrow.

The round barrows do not sit on the highest point of the Ridgeway, instead each lies on the slope but in such a position that they can be seen from distance. Furthermore, the barrows make a connection between earlier monuments (simply by the designed proximity of location), natural topography and visual linkages between different sites and areas, and it is clear that these choreographed associations were an attempt at integrating with and manipulating an already highly symbolically charged landscape.



6. METHODOLOGY

The field investigation was carried out by David McOmish and Cathy Tuck. Field photography was carried out by Cathy Tuck and Damian Grady. The measured survey of the bank barrow and associated monuments was carried out entirely digitally by using a Leica T805 Electronic Theodolite with integral Electromagnetic Distance Measurement (EDM) from a baseline traverse of two stations. The resulting plan was plotted at 1:1000 scale via Key Terrafirma, AutoCAD and CorelDraw software.

The hand drawn archive plan and CAD-based drawings were prepared using CorelDraw 9 software by David McOmish. The report was researched and written by David McOmish, and edited by Cathy Tuck and Peter Topping.

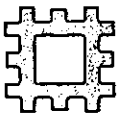
The site archive has been deposited in English Heritage's National Monuments Record Centre, Great Western Village, Kemble Drive, Swindon, SN2 2GZ, to where applications for copyright should be made.

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